

Remarks/Arguments:

Applicants' acknowledge with thanks the courtesy extended to their representative by Examiner Hollington during the telephone interview of January 23, 2007. During the course of the interview, Applicants' representative explained why Applicants' claims are distinguishable from the art of record. In particular, Applicants' representative pointed to specific language in the claim which describes a feature not found in the art of record. That argument is now being provided in written form for the Examiner's further review.

As explained during the interview, the present invention relates to, for example, an apparatus for establishing a distance between a test head and a peripheral. Test heads include electrical pins which are moved into position so that they touch electrical contacts on a peripheral. However, it is very important for the test head to stop moving towards the peripheral after the test heads pins have reached the peripheral. If the test head comes to close to the peripheral, then the pins will be crushed. Test heads often have weight in excess of 2,000 pounds. This concept is described in the originally-filed application on page 3, line 24, et seq.:

The docking apparatus must provide a means to establish the final docked distance or "height" between the test head and the peripheral such that the electrical contacts are satisfactorily mated (that is, with sufficient compression, scrub, etc. to assure a low-resistance connection) and such that the test head does not over-travel and does damage or destroy the contacts.

The prior art is further described in the originally-filed application at page 4, line 22 et seq.:

Furthermore, although there have been limited attempts to provide multiple-height docking apparatus that allows the docked height to be adjusted or selected, it is presently customary to use single-height docking apparatus having a single, built-in docking height. This is because the mechanisms employed in multiple height docks have proven to be limited in operation or difficult to effectively operate.

At this time, Applicants' representative wishes to respectfully point out that the Kerschner Patent (US 4,993,136) cited in the outstanding Official Action suffers from the disadvantages described above in Applicants' "Prior Art" section. Kerschner is a single-height dock. Kerschner provides only a single distance between his printed circuit board and the testing system that test the printed circuit board. Kerschner does not provide a mechanism to vary how close his test apparatus can travel to his circuit board before further travel is prevented.

Applicants, however, have created an invention which allows a user to vary how close a test head can come to a peripheral before further motion is prevented. In an exemplary embodiment described in Applicants' specification at page 10, line 4 et seq.:

FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view and FIG. 5A is an enlarged exploded perspective view of U-frame 401 shown in FIG. 2. As discussed above, U-frame 401 is movable relative to test head 300.

Further explanation is provided on page 10, lines 20-21:

Thus, rotation of crank 426 causes U-frame 401 to move relative to test head 300.

As explained above, the ability to move U-frame 401 allows a user to decide how close a test head can get to a peripheral before no further motion is permitted (thus preventing the contacts between the test head and the peripheral from being crushed). Applicants' claim 1 thus provides:

...a sliding unit for

(a) changing position of said linear units relative to said other said test head and said peripheral or

(b) changing position of said alignment features relative to said one of said test head and said peripheral

in order to change said dock distance.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to specifically note that claim 1 includes recitation of "said docked distance." "Said docked distance" has specific meaning which is defined in Applicant's claim 1 as follows:

...said alignment features and said linear units preventing said test head and said peripheral from being closer to each other than a docked distance...

The argument of Applicants' representative is simply that the Kerschner Patent neither discloses nor describes any structure which allows Kerschner to "change said docked distance." As Applicants' representative has recited specific structure in claim 1 which allows a user to change a distance that prevents "said test head and said peripheral from being closer to each other" Applicant's claim 1 is patentable over the Kerschner Patent.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The remaining claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency on allowable claim 1.

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Amendment Dated: February 28, 2007
Reply to Office Action of: December 22, 2006

ITC-338US

In view of the arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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LEA/mjc

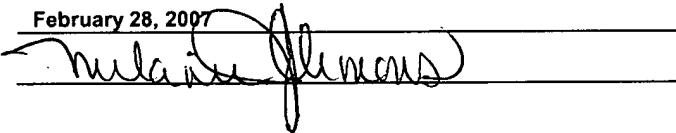
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February 28, 2007



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